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CLUB OF ROME

ANNCR:

THE CLUB OF ROME, A PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL GROUP OF SCHOLARS AND BUSINESSMEN, HAS TURNED ITS ATTENTION FROM LIMITS ON ECONOMIC GROWTH TO DEVELOPING PLANS TO IMPROVE MANKIND'S ECONOMIC FUTURE. V-O-A'S FRED COOPER HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA.

VOICE:

THE CLUB OF ROME IS HOLDING ITS ANNUAL MEETING THIS WEEK IN PHILADELPHIA UNDER THE GENERAL THEME "NEW HORIZONS FOR MANKIND". THE GROUP OF INTELLECTUALS, WHO ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO PROBLEMS THEY FEEL ARE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENTS TO SOLVE, IS BEST KNOWN FOR ITS NINETEEN SEVENTY-TWO STUDY, "THE LIMITS TO GROWTH." THE STUDY PAINTED AN APOCALYPTIC PICTURE OF A WORLD WHERE UNBRIDLED ECONOMIC AND POPULATION GROWTH OUTSTRIPS THE EARTH'S NATURAL RESOURCES. THE ALTERNATIVE, THE CLUB OF ROME PROPOSED, WAS A STEADY, STAID WORLD ECONOMIC AND A MORE AUSTERE LIFESTYLE FOR THE INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS.

THE CLUB OF ROME REPORT GENERATED A GREAT DEAL OF CONTROVERSY WITH SOME CRITICS SAYING THE "LIMITS TO GROWTH" IS AN OVERSIMPLIFIED, DOOMSDAY SCENARIO. OTHERS PREDICTED THAT TECHNOLOGY WILL OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS OUTLINED IN THE STUDY AND ARGUED THAT LIMITING ECONOMIC GROWTH WOULD CONSIGN THE POOR NATIONS TO A FUTURE OF CONTINUED POVERTY. BUT REGARDLESS OF THE CONVERSITY, AT THE VERY LEAST, THE STUDY

SERVED TO MAKE THE WORLD MORE CONSCIOUS OF ITS DIMINISHING NATIONAL RESOURCES.

AT THIS YEAR'S SESSION, THE CLUB OF ROME IS MOVING BEYOND THE LIMITS TO GROWTH BELIEVING THAT ITS CHALLENGE NOW IS TO LOOK FOR CONCRETE SOLUTIONS TO THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THE CONFERENCE IS PREVIEWING ANOTHER CLUB STUDY -- THIS ONE A COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENT ON HOW THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC ORDER COULD BE RESHAPED. THE GATHERING IS ALSO DISCUSSING NEW ANALYTICAL TOOLS FOR ECONOMIC POLICYMAKERS, AS WELL AS WHAT THE GROUP FEELS SHOULD BE SOME COMMON GOALS FOR SOCIETY.

IN MAKING ITS PROPOSALS FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, THE CLUB OF ROME IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO CREATE EVEN MORE CONTROVERSY. ITS STUDY CONDUCTED BY TEN WORKING GROUPS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF NOBEL PRIZE WINNING DUTCH ECONOMIST JAN TINBERGEN TACKLED ISSUES RANGING FROM ARMS CONTROL TO THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY SYSTEM. AMONG ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ARE SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN THE TRANSFER OF RESOURCES FROM THE DEVELOPED TO THE THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, MORE LENDING FROM OIL-PRODUCING NATIONS, AND RESEARCH ON THE FEASIBILITY OF FORMING PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL ENTERPRISES TO REPLACE MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS.

THE STUDY ALSO PROPOSES INCREASED PRESSURE BE PUT ON THE SUPERPOWERS TO REDIRECT EXPENDITURES FROM ARMS TO DEVELOPMENT AID, MORE ADEQUATE FOOD STOCKPILING, AND ACCELERATION OF UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS. THE REPORT'S AUTHORS BELIEVE THE CENTRAL ISSUE IS EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL NATIONS. THEY FEEL THERE MUST BE TRANSNATIONAL DECISION MAKING MACHINERY TO PUT THESE PROPOSALS INTO EFFECT, SINCE, THEY SAY, EXCLUSIVE NATIONAL DECISIONS WILL NOT, AS A RULE, BE THE BEST DECISION.

INTRODUCING A DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY, SWEDISH UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE INGA THORESSON CALLED IT AN AGENDA FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION THAT IF IMPLEMENTED COULD RESULT IN MARKED CHANGES IN THE WORLD WITHIN FORTY YEARS. BUT SOME OF ITS CRITICS HERE AT THE CLUB OF ROME MEETING CALL IT A UTOPIAN VISION OR THEY FAULT IT FOR FAILING TO ADDRESS SUCH ISSUES AS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES WITHIN NATIONS.

NEVERTHELESS, IF THE CLUB OF ROME'S REPORT ON A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER STIMULATES THE SAME SORT OF CONSTRUCTIVE DEBATE LIMITS TO GROWTH DID, THE TWO YEARS OF WORK THAT WENT INTO ITS MAKING WILL NOT HAVE BEEN IN VAIN.

JS/PY